

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of allowing public transit agencies to flex their federal transit funding for operating expenses.

Current law forbids transit systems in areas with a population of over 200,000 to use funds for operating.

This has forced transit agencies across our country to cut services at a time when people are using public transit more than ever.

In 2008, transit use reached its highest level in 5 DECADES.

In my home state of New Jersey, you can take a bus to any part of the state and there is nearly 1,000 miles of rail line.

Building this dynamic transportation system took years to develop, yet routes are being slashed because of the high cost of operating expenses.

All across our nation, public transportation routes are being closed and it is critical that we find a solution for our constituents.

Congressman Carnahan has introduced a bill, HR 2746, that would allow public transit agencies to use some of their federal funding for operating expenses.

I am a proud co-sponsor of this bill and urge my colleagues to support legislation that gives transit agencies the flexibility necessary to continue their great services.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I yield the balance of my time.